

July 10, 2017

Dear FCC,

I am writing as an individual to oppose revocation of “net neutrality” rules for the internet. I am specifically commenting about the implications for democracy.

The internet started as a means to share knowledge, then came commerce and amusement.

Now the internet is also a major political force, with groups inside and outside our country successfully gaming the social media platforms to spread an alternative version of “news” that is really just propaganda. These are bad developments, but things can get even worse without “net neutrality”.

One force for good, still existing, consists of the independent news media who work very hard to present complete and balanced pictures of events. The “good” character has eroded over recent decades as some major outlets now represent interests of very wealthy individuals who bought them out, skewing public debates away from balanced reporting. However, the takeover is not complete and balanced viewpoints are still reasonably accessible — especially via the internet.

The net neutrality rules are one necessary ingredient to avoid a complete collapse of democracy, helping to prevent a possible future where the interests of a wealthy minority become stronger and stronger via increasing control of all the major information forums including the internet. The experience of the news media shows how wealth can be used to control the flow of information, and how that in turn affects the political environment. Money is already required for access to public communication, but once the access speed favors those who can pay for that too, things will become even more unbalanced. Wealth buys power and power enables wealth to grow.

Now is a societal tipping point, this is not just about which company will make a little more or less profit. Please, for the sake of our democracy, work to preserve access and net neutrality and do not dismantle one of the last hopes for truth to find its way.

Sincerely,
Christopher Wendt